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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of Filipino immigrants to America has coincided with the martial law era in the Philippines. Consequently, this exodus has become a significant political issue for the government of Ferdinand Marcos. Since the Filipino government wishes to retain positive influence and goodwill with those who choose to settle elsewhere, it has initiated a number of questionable policies. First, the Marcos government's desire for popularity with Filipinos overseas has led the President to seek their goodwill at the expense of developmental goals at home. Specifically, the government's subsidized tourism and preferential investment policies for Filipino Americans have had a negative impact on most Filipinos remaining in the islands. Secondly, the government has attempted to manipulate Filipino American groups and individuals by rewarding those favorably inclined toward the President, and harassing those who do not agree with his policies. The consequences of this struggle between pro- and anti-Marcos groups, precipitated by the Marcos government, will destroy the ethnic unity needed for minority mobility in the United States. (Author/APM)

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Filipinos in America:

Target Constituency for the "New Society"

by

Linda Richter

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Filipinos in America:

Target Constituency for the "New Society"

FILIPINOS IN AMERICA: TARGET CONSTITUENCY

FOR THE "NEW SOCIETY"

Introduction

Filipinos are the second fastest growing immigrant group in America society, outpaced in 1980 only by the deluge of Cuban arrivals.[1] Filipino migration began 75 years ago, but it is only in recent years that the trickle of new immigrants begun then has become a flood. Today, nearly a million Filipinos reside in the United States and there are major Filipino communities in Hawaii (15 percent of the state), California, Illinois and New York.[2]

Their motives for coming to the United States vary from political asylum to economic opportunities and from permanent settlement to temporary work assignment. Regardless of motivation it is clear that their soaring numbers and even more impressive visa applications to America have coincided with the martial law era in the Philippines. Because of this, their very exodus from the Philippines has become a significant political issue for the government of Ferdinand Marcos.[3]

Any Filipino government would want to retain positive influence and goodwill with those who choose to settle elsewhere. However, this study questions some of the policy approaches of the Philippine administration in pursuing this natural goal. First, that in two major instances, the Marcos government's desire for popularity with overseas Filipinos has led the President to seek their goodwill at the expense of developmental goals at home. Specifically, the government's subsidized tourism and its preferential investment policies for American Filipinos have secured personal or regime-specific political benefits for the President while having a negative impact on most Filipinos.

Secondly, the Philippine government has attempted, primarily through its embassy and consulates, to manipulate Filipino-American groups and individuals. It has done this by supporting and rewarding those favorably inclined toward the President while harassing (or worse) those not in accord with the New Society.

Thirdly, the author suggests that the consequences of the struggle between pro and anti Marcos groups will be unequal in nature and destructive of the very ethnic unity needed for minority mobility in the United States.

The analysis of these topics is complicated by several factors:

(1) Sources are rarely neutral and informed about the New Society. Often commentaries seem to be talking about two completely different countries!

(2) It is analytically difficult to separate the numerous efforts of the regime to woo Americans in general from those directed at Filipino Americans in particular. However, since the regime's public relations efforts with respect to tourism, land reform and energy have been examined elsewhere, this paper will focus primarily on issues affecting the Filipino community in America.[4] It should be remembered, however, that the overseas Filipino is likely to monitor general publicity from and about the Philippines more closely than the average citizen.[5]

(3) Rumors are rife about the involvement of Philippine agents in the United States, the activities of supportive and hostile regime groups, and the subtle and sometimes not so subtle efforts at cooptation or coercion. There is reason to assume that complaints on both sides have some validity. Rumors often turn out at least as factual regarding the Philippines and Filipinos as many so-called "hard" sources. Still, unless there was an "on record" authority for a statement or positions, such information was not included in this paper.

What follows is first of all a discussion of the reasons why this particular administration is preoccupied with its image abroad, secondly, an account of its overtures toward the American Filipino community and their likely impact in the Philippines, and finally a disturbing assessment of the government's willingness to interfere with dissidents living abroad and to divide the Filipino community.

Part I.

President Marcos has been most careful throughout his tenure to pursue his political objectives with more than casual attention to legitimizing his goals. He has done this in terms persuasive to both domestic and international constituencies. Despite the rhetoric of his campaigns and speeches, insiders long ago labeled the President a "segurista" because of his cautious concern for his political longevity.

The selling of martial law was his most ambitious project, because it represented such a profound political departure from the untidy but vital democratic government that had been America's proudest colonial legacy and an oasis of pluralism in Southeast Asia.

Despite this, most people within the Philippines, most government and international aid organizations and multinational corporations appear to have "bought" martial law--Filipino style--at least in its early years.

It was sold as the New Society, which would eradicate bastions of oligarchic control, encourage national self-reliance, break up large concentrations of land ownership and bring law and order to the Philippines. Whether it did or did not accomplish its lofty goals has been the topic of numerous forums, but that it initially appeared to be succeeding is less debatable.

A major contributor to the President's success was his skilled control and use of the national media. Travel promotions masked the repression of other sectors. Instead of clumsy censorship of the media, the relatives and friends of the First Couple took over the major papers to assure positive media coverage and reliable public and press relations staff moved into the more visible roles in priority policy sectors. (The military kept a low profile well-removed from foreign and tourist concentrations.) Home base was in safe hands.

However, the President also critically needed to legitimize martial law in the eyes of the United States. His reversal of the nationalist moves initiated by the Philippine Congress and his generous incentives for foreign investment consoled the American business community--which like the American government does not always distinguish between a friendly people and a friendly dictator. His initiatives on land reform, however modest, bolstered his stock with aid consultants and scholars. Yet, how does one assert the attractiveness of the New Society while hundreds queue outside the American Embassy to file immigration papers?

Any country retains an interest in those of its citizens who work or settle abroad. Ties of families, culture, and yes, foreign exchange contribute to a natural concern with the fate and well-being of its emigrants. Governments want those who leave to continue to feel affection and some political loyalty to the mother government. Any government would want to avoid arms being smuggled into the country from abroad, the formation of self-proclaimed governments in exile or political activity aimed at influencing the country of residence to react unfavorably toward the dissident's former homeland.

These motivations also encouraged the Philippine government to seek a good press with overseas Filipinos. There have been accelerated efforts to

increase tax revenues, for example, from Filipinos living abroad. Last year the government collected an estimated 24 to 34 million pesos (3½ million to 5 million dollars) from Filipinos overseas.[6] Though the sums seem modest, that much money would fund completely any one of several Philippine government bureaus or commissions. Since the government depends on voluntary compliance, favorable attitudes toward the New Society are important. Remittances from Filipinos working abroad to relatives and investments in the Philippines have assumed a staggering impact: somewhere between 359 million and one billion dollars![7] The government has also sought to maximize the economic contributions of those Filipinos working temporarily overseas by charging $60 for passports good only two years![8]

The Phillipines under Marcos has also become increasingly and unprecedently dependent on foreign loans and aid. By February, the country's external debt exceeded 13.5 billion dollars--the highest per capita debt in Asia.[9] So serious has the problem become that it has now become an object of satire, as in the underground publication "Sick of the Times" - itself a play on the title of the controversial publication by some clerics, "Signs of the Time." In the article "Luzon Mortaged" there is sarcastic criticism of the country's 600 percent increase in national indebtedness since 1972 when President Marcos declared martial law.

Such aid could be adversely affected by the activities of Filipino dissidents. Filipinos are also an unusually politicized minority group, accustomed to a Philippines that historically had nourished a well-honed tradition of political competition. They knew how to cause trouble for Marcos, even if their familial and ideological factionalism often prevented them from forging a common opposition front.[10]

From a political standpoint the stakes are even higher. Part of the President's solicitude for overseas Filipino attitudes reflects his

characteristic sensitivity to public relations. Part is also a reflection of the well-deserved reputation Filipinos have for political savvy and their rapid upward mobility in numerous spheres of American life.

American Filipinos became involved in numerous Filipino organizations, but it was their impressively rapid assimilation into occupational and other non-ethnic groups that threatened to multiply their political effectiveness among non-Filipinos. By 1980, though one of the most recent large-scale immigrant groups, Filipinos were being hailed as the "best oriented and socially adjusted" ethnic group from Asia.[11]

Easing their transition to American life and their corresponding political mobility was the fact that despite different regional linguistic roots, most immigrants knew English well. They were also familiar with American culture and relatively well-educated by comparison with other immigrant groups. Given these advantages, it is not surprising that most have prospered and several have become politicians in America.[12]

Given the political and economic potential of U.S. Filipinos to enhance or complicate New Society political goals, it is understandable that Philippine Ambassador to the United States Eduardo Z. Romualdez (uncle of the First Lady) should be reported as "exhorting" U.S. Filipinos to show their pride in the Philippines and its New Society.[13] The current regime has not been content to restrict itself to exhortions, however. Vast sums are spent on public relations events, newspapers, and even blandishments directed at academia. But it is the government's initiatives specifically toward overseas Filipinos that is the focus of this paper's inquiry.

Part II

Subsidized Tourism

From the onset of martial law, President Marcos has sought to utilize government-sponsored tourism as a political tool for asserting the attractiveness of the New Society and for a host of other public and private political motives detailed elsewhere. But tourism per se does not still the criticisms of expatriate groups nor challenge their claims about the New Society. For that the Balikbayan program was created.

The Balikbayan or "homecoming" program initially began in 1973 as an invitation to overseas Filipinos to come home for Christmas, a holiday celebrated longer and more sentimentally in the Philippines than reputedly anywhere else. Created by the politically sage and newly established Department of Tourism (DOT) the program included a major discount on airfare as well as concessional rates on accommodations and shopping.

The success of these incentives required coordination and cooperation well beyond the DOT. National and local departments, agencies and bureaus, embassies and consulates were marshalled behind the extraordinary effort. Hundreds of thousands of brochures entitled "Invitation to a Traditional Philippine Christmas" were sent to overseas Filipinos. School children discovered their English and penmanship assignments were to write relatives abroad inviting them "home" for Christmas! City governments were instructed to organize welcoming committees, develop "traditional" activities. Tax and customs officials were instructed to forego their tasks and exempt "balikbayans" from tax clearances and import limits.[14]

The initial three-month program, extended repeatedly, has become a regular feature of the government's campaign toward overseas Filipinos. Finally, in March, 1981, the program was extended for five years--esta-

blishing, as New Society journalist Teodoro Valencia put it, "a clear indication that the government has realized its worth."[15] What has the government achieved from its enormous administrative costs, foregone taxes and its tourism subsidy for overseas Filipinos? A lot. Over 500,000 overeseas Filipinos have returned for a usually brief visit to the New Society. Over 68,000 came in a six month interval in 1980 alone.[16]

The government justified its program within the Philippines on primarily economic grounds. Tourism officials interviewed insisted that the program was a financial bonanza, worth an average profit of $500 per Balikbayan.[17] Such figures never seemed convincing given the enormous publicity and coordination required, the actual subsidies and the fact that most Balikbayans visted relatives rather than staying in hotels or touring widely.

But consider the political harvest! Domestically, the government could publicize both the numbers of Filipino visitors and their favorable comments about the "New Society." The martial law government had achieved impressive infrastructure development--especially in the "Tourist Belt;" cleanliness, beautification and law and order had significantly improved within major tourist sites. Thus, the government could expect a favorable impression among recent arrivals.

Media censorship, political torture, ethnic issues, civil war in the South, the decline in the <u>real</u> wages of the average Filipino--none of these aspects are likely to be very salient to a Balikbayan on vacation. Balikbayans like most tourists could be expected to be more impressed with the relatively relaxed atmosphere and the congenial surroundings than the paucity of civil liberties. Yet, they were more politically useful than ordinary tourists because they were in a position

to compare the New Society on a fleeting basis with the Old Society they had known better and had chosen to leave.

By 1981, even Marcos apologist Valencia was not attempting to suggest that the Balikbayan program had prospered for its economic importance:

> The government, of course, has lost and is losing a rather substantial amount of revenue from the program. But the benefits derived by the country not only from the foreign currency spent here, but also from the forging of a strong spiritual unity among Filipinos are far greater. It is also an effective means of rebutting through actual experience the lies they have spread about this country in foreign lands.[18]

Reinforcing Valencia's position is Carmelito Llapitan, past President of the Filipino-American Council of Chicago, Inc. He has urged Filipinos in America "to come as Balikbayans to know the truth about their country."[19] He may not be a totally disinterested source, however. The Fil-Am Council of Chicago is an umbrella group for several Filipino organizations, but its critics charge that it is little more than a political extension of the Philippine Consulate--a charge not likely to be diluted with the new President's unilateral decision to ask Imelda Marcos to induct the Council's new officers! (She accepted.)[20]

Pro-Marcos papers distributed in America such as the Manila Journal, the Filipino Reporter and the Philippine Herald have made adroit publicity from the comments of Balikbayans and their occasional decisions to return to the Philippines or their announced intention of investing in the New Society.

So successful has the program become that the government no longer inflates the numbers of returnees by including their foreign born relatives of non-Filipino descent. It has also restricted Americans and other foreigners who were making "return" trips to the Philippines

from using Balikbayan discounts. The tightened eligibility is also directed at overseas Filipinos who have sought to use relaxed tax and customs laws to "return" repeatedly.

Originally, the government was more interested in establishing the popularity of the New Society as a destination for former Filipinos than in delimiting Balikbayan status to those for whom it was supposedly designed. This legerdemain also made it impossible to compare the number of Filipinos who returned for visits prior to martial law and without concessions with the number that have come since the New Society created discounts for their visits.[21]

Another possible objective was to enlarge the category of returning Filipinos by simultaneously reducing the disproportionate number of tourists labeled as Americans. The Philippines' tourist offensive rests dangerously on a few countries for which the tourism ministry has been criticized. By extracting the American Balikbayans from Americans in general, the government maximizes the political use of the Balikbayan figures and minimizes the appearance of the Philippines reliance on Americans for its tourism program, since Balikbayans are overwhelmingly from the United States.

Today the government has refined its target populations with subsequent programs aimed specifically at overseas Filipinos likely to have considerable influence. The Balik-Scientist program was announced October, 1975 with Presidential Decree No. 819. In addition to regular Balikbayan features, it includes incentives for practicing professionally in the Philippines.[22] Balik-UP was adopted in 1978 to encourage the visits of alumni from the prestigious University of the Philippines.[23]

The Balikbayan program in particular and Philippine tourism in general have also encouraged the government to concentrate its attention

on travel agents, especially the numbers of Filipino agents in America and Canada. Techniques allegedly include both the carrot and the stick. Filipino travel agents are wined and dined on "familiarization tours" of the country designed expressly for overseas Filipinos.[24] Those agents that prove empathetic to the government and interested in organizing tours to the Philippines find little difficulty in getting superior accommodations and almost instantaneous visas for their clients. They may also be approached to contribute to Philippine publicity efforts here or stateside hospitality for Philippine dignitaries visting the U.S.

Travel agents who are not so cooperative or who advertise in anti-Marcos publications or who are otherwise identified as "unfriendly" find it difficult to expedite travel arrangements for their clients. Though there is a certain underlying logic in such reputed favoritism, there is also the possibility of bureaucratic delay that is coincidental and totally non-political in character.[25]

The tourism effort has also concentrated on conventions. In most cases, the subsidy of such conventions rests with the extravagant facilities built as venue and the promotional expenses involved in attracting such confabs. For example, in 1980 when the 63rd Lions World Congress was held in Chicago with its sizeable Filipino population, the Philippines sent 200 of the 600 foreign delegates attending, including the Mayor of Manila.

Though outward-bound travel for Filipinos is discouraged by bureaucratic clearances, the problems of taking out foreign excha , etc., such barriers were apparently relaxed when the government sought to bid for the 1986 Lions Convention. The daughter of the First

Lady's personal secretary was the head of the Folk Art Troupe that provided the Lions' evening entertainment. The enormous costs involved suggest that the convention bid entailed primarily non-economic considerations.[26] The media coverage of the Lions Convention in U.S.-based pro-Marcos Filipino papers demonstrates that the Filipino in America was also being wooed.

Another example of convention politics was the Pacific and Asian Conference of Municipalities held in Manila in May, 1977. It was of modest size, involving fewer than 500 delegates, of whom 300 were Filipino Mayors signed up with an eye to taking over the organization.[27] The 200 foreign delegates hosted by the city of Manila were lavishly entertained with their travel and convention costs substantially subsidized.[28]

Of relevance here were the special considerations directed at influencing American Filipinos and supporting officials with large American Filipino constituencies. During pre-planning conferences for the PACOM, discussion included ways in which the then PACOM President Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi would be in a position to help the many Filipino Americans in Hawaii. His record of Filipino appointments was considered good and it was then hoped he would become governor of the state. Every effort was planned to impress Fasi. However, he was defeated in his gubernatorial bid, but not before his Filipino hosts became disenchanted with his abrasiveness and had substituted Manila Mayor Ramon Bagatsing as the new PACOM president. At least three of the mayors attending were themselves Filipino Americans. These gentlemen were given special attention at the conference.[29]

Institutionalized Contacts with American Filipinos

Another facet of the government's efforts to influence Filipino Americans is its effort to institutionalize contacts between the New Society and these individuals. This has taken several forms. First, there have been joint private sector-government initiatives to reward overseas Filipinos who are perceived as exceptional in their "constructive" comments about the New Society and in their professional life. Nominations for such awards are made by Philippine consulates.[30] The actual awards are granted by the Philippine Jaycees and the Ministry of Tourism jointly and are widely publicized within the United States.[31]

A second type of institutionalized contact has been for the Philippine government through its embassy and consulates selectively to support and encourage certain Filipino groups and publications, seeing that they enjoy excellent publicity, preferred access to Filipino entertainers and spokespersons for their programs. Some contend that the consulates finance certain Filipino associations.

A third example has been the attempt by the Philippine consulates in the United States to serve as loci for overseas Filipinos in their organizational planning and in their contacts with representatives of the American government. For example, Consul General Trinidad Q. Alconcel invited Filipino community leaders in Hawaii to the Philippines Consulate to meet with the U.S. Bureau of Census officials.[32] The consulate and the American Filipino community are both naturally interested in having the significantly enlarged Filipino strength in the country reflected in the census figures, because of the economic and political benefits which will accrue. The Philippine consulate as a venue, however, gives Philippine diplomatic personnel an unusual

opportunity to monitor Filipinos in the country and encourages the U.S. government to see the consulate as a more neutral liaison with the Filipino community than it is in fact.

Fourthly, President Marcos announced, during his controversial visit to Hawaii last year, that he would set up a special commission to take care of the needs of the over 2 million Filipinos living abroad. It would, he said:

> put under one roof all government agencies operating for the benefit of Filipinos...The Commission...will tell overseas Filipinos about what is actually happening in their homeland and will encourage them to visit and invest in the Philippines. ...The President also assured overseas Filipinos who wish to invest in the Philippines that they would be given preference in the award of big government projects...Even those who have taken up foreign citizenship will be aided by the commission.[33]

A fifth dimension of the government's efforts to tie the overseas Filipino to the New Society has perhaps the strongest implications for coopting him politically. During the Hawaii visit, the President promised representatives of the Fil-Am community that he would ask the Batasang Pambansa to present an amendment for ratification by plebiscite allowing for dual citizenship. Under the amendment former Filipino nationals could reacquire their citizenship rights--including those of property ownership and participation in the retail trade.[34]

Amendment 1 went before the voters April 7, 1981 and passed by the substantial margin characteristically associated with such plebiscites.[35] Several of the other amendments passed were decidedly more controversial because they affected the future immunity of the current regime and changed the entire electoral and succession systems. As a result, there was little discussion in the local press of Amendment 1.[36]

Because there was virtually no possibility the measures would be defeated, pro-Marcos publications in the United States began celebrating

early. The New York-based Filipino Reporter headlined Amendment 1 as a "New Deal for US Filipinos" and there was little doubt as to who would reap the political goodwill: "I am sure that they (U.S. Filipinos) will forever be grateful to President Marcos for making their wishes possible.[37]

And they indeed were. In fact, one group of American Filipinos arranged a satellite dialogue with President Marcos in order to thank him "face to face."[38] And why not? For in the process of authorizing dual citizenship, U.S. Filipinos have also acquired a "most favored status" with their Filipino citizenship. A quick look at the advantages of "long distance citizenship" is instructive.

At a time when "urban land reform" is in vogue in the Metro Manila area and housing and land scarcity there are strikingly acute, President Marcos has made it possible for American Filipinos to buy--on an individual basis--1000 sq. metres of Metro Manila, already one of the most lucrative pieces of real estate in the world! Just how ironic this is, is seen by juxtaposing these new opportunities for stateside "citizens" along side the comments of Gaudencia Tobias, General Manager of the National Housing Authority. In the 1980 Fookien Times Yearbook Tobias outlines the stark conditions of land scarcity, needed expropriations of urban residential land, and the appalling housing shortage in Metro Manila.[39]

No one would be so naive as to claim that if American Filipinos could not buy land in Manila the housing situation would be ameliorated. But at a juncture when urban concentrations of land are being parceled out, it is a bizarre time to invite non-citizens to purchase property. It is also not as if they were being invited to "settle" some remote

area and homestead it. Quite the contrary, thousands of squatter shacks testify to the crippling lack of land and social services for the poor.

Even the middle class in urban areas "contend with the lack of dwelling units which are available for rent or for sale," according to Tobias.[40] Given these conditions what can the passage of this measure mean for urban Filipinos? Dr. Mercedes Concepcion, head of the University of the Philippines Population Institute predicts the following: (1) Brokers will increase sale prices to reflect the greater buying power of American Filipinos; (2) Prices will skyrocket, making it impossible for all but very affluent Filipinos to buy homes; (3) The housing problem will intensify and rents will soar; (4) Filipino Americans will buy and then rent out homes until they retire, thereby creating a new dimension in absentee landlordship.[41]

This "doomsday scenario" may seem unduly gloomy, but it is instructive to consider what has happened to housing in Manila and other urban areas when the President has sought to lure foreigners before. Thirty time more funds were spent on luxury hotels in 1976 than public housing. The conversion of small apartment complexes to tourist pensions allowed many to avoid rent control and displaced thousands of urban renters.[42]

Numerous squatters shacks have been bulldozed for beautification of the roads linking Manila with the international airport, and in February, the worst slums were hidden from the Pope by the creation of gaily painted fences. Of course, neither the President nor the American Filipino community is consciously trying to impoverish anyone. But surely it is legitimate to inquire why the President's priorities are more focused on Honolulu than on Tondo.

Similar caveats need to be made about the other aspects of Amendment 1. Should an American Filipino prefer a more pastoral existence, he is entitled to buy three hectares of rural land. That is roughly double the amount actually distributed to the amortizing farmer in rice and corn lands on a per family basis. If 25% of those eligible to purchase rural land actually did so, more hectarage would transfer to Americans than was distributed to Filipino tenants and their families during the government's widely touted land reform program![43]

Moreover, the legal problems involved in the implementation of this measure are bound to be onerous. Since overseas Filipinos are the only ones entitled to buy land who live outside the Philippines, a problem also arises with respect to inheritance. Families once intending to sell or parcel out their land may now retain it for their overseas relatives. Overseas Filipinos who buy land may in fact make it possible for their non-Filipino heirs to own land in the Philippines. In many cases such situations are likely to be no more than a generation away. The problem is no one knows how many overseas Filipinos are likely to purchase what kind of land in what areas for what purposes or whether their heirs are of Filipino or some other ancestry.

Interviews at the Philippine Consulate in Hawaii suggested the measure was supported by the President at the suggestion of someone within the Hawaiian Filipino community. No study of its impact or legal and social ramifications was apparently considered.[44]

Land hunger is desperate in the Philippines. So it was a matter of great expectations when the President launched his land reform program as the "cornerstone of the New Society." Within days of the onset of martial law the land reform program was outlined, but over the years since 1972 it has been diluted in scope, diminished beyond

recognition it its redistributive elements, and continually enfeebled by the President's lackluster commitment to its implementation. The acute scarcity of land has meant that tenants who met all the onerous requirements for purchasing the land they had tilled received an average of 1.8 hectares or scarcely half of what is considered a viable family plot.[45]

The disappointment associated with land reform among both tenants and agrarian reform officials makes the President's gesture to the American Filipino community seem all the more cynical and insensitive. Naturally, it pleased the Filipino American community which was probably unaware of the economic hardship it could entail in the Philippines. Again, it is not the responsiblity of the Fil-Am community to weigh Filipino needs; it emphatically is the duty of the Philippine President, particularly in the absence of any meaningful constraints on his authority. These actions betrayed a perverse consistency in the Marcos personality for being more responsive to foreigners for personal political advantage than to his official constituency, the Filipino people. The actions also were evidence of the President's frequent tendency to buy short-run political approval for himself at the cost of long-range hardship for others. Though a common failing of politicians, is is a characteristic the President has carried to extremes. As Reuben Canoy noted in the Counterfeit Revolution, "the men around him are frequently appalled that he cannot resist the impulse to promise, even when there is no need to make one."[46]

Part III

New Society Actions Aimed at American Filipino Critics

Tourism, public relations, and even the very land of the Philippines have been marshalled for influencing Filipino Americans that the New

Society deserves their support. Such initiatives have been both clever and probably successful in garnering legitimacy for the regime or at least muting criticism of it within the American Filipino community. All of these techniques are also perfectly legal.

For those not so easily persuaded, the Philippine government uses less subtle methods. While its repertoire of responses is scarcely unique to President Marcos, it does suggest that whatever is "new" about the "New Society," its techniques toward dissidents aren't. For example, it is not particularly surprising that the government would have intelligence personnel at major gatherings where the Philippines is being discussed. More surprising was the fact that one individual at the 1980 International Philippines Studies conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan actually left his Malacanang tags on his luggage.[39] It was also following this conference that one Filipino defender of the administration proposed a Congressional inquiry of the conference because of the criticisms of President Marcos and United States policy toward the Philippines advanced at the Conference.[47] He had been however, selected by the Philippine Ministry of Tourism and the Jaycees as a recipient of their Outstanding Overseas Filipino Award. Whether this gentleman had anything to do with the Marcos administration is unknown.

In some instances individuals outspoken in their opposition to the regime like Primitivo Mihares, author of The Conjugal Dictatorship, have disappeared and are presumed dead, after attempts to bribe them into silence had failed. More often, as Jack Anderson has documented, intelligence and military personnel are content to keep opposition forces under surveillance, harassing and intimidating them and their supporters on occasion.[48]

Complaints in Seattle, New York and Chicago have specifically charged that the Philippine consulates have been involved in legal and physical harassment. For example, Aimee Cruz of the KDP was hounded by immigration officials acting on false data reputedly supplied by Philippine agents. In Chicago, the KDP and the Anti-Martial Law Coalition claim that the consulate calls critics and "waverers" attempting to intimidate them. Consequently, in July, 1980 a suspicious case of arson at Chicago KDP headquarters was seen by dissidents as part of a campaign of harassment by representatives of the Marcos government operating in the U.S.[49]

They may be quite wrong; however, the repeated attempts to thwart anti-Marcos groups legally operating within the U.S. has created a climate of paranoia within such groups. Among such efforts: a blackout on news except from pro-Marcos groups, such "dirty tricks" as inventing fictitious incidents to scare people from attending such events as the 1980 Chicago Filipino National Day Celebration. Rumors had been circulated for weeks, reputedly by the Consulate, that those attending would be "blacklisted" because of their association with the KDP and the AMLC groups active in the event's organization.[50]

The activities of the anti-Marcos groups have also been called into serious question by the rash of arson and other acts of terrorism in the Philippines which the Embassy contends were organized within the U.S. That may well be true and a subject of genuine concern not only for American Filipinos but for the U.S. government as well. The Embassy has repeatedly urged the F.B.I. to investigate anti-Marcos groups to see if a link to the violence in the Philippines can be determined. A more direct link may be the Marcos government itself.

As John Kennedy once said: "Those who make peaceful change impossible, make violent change inevitable."

The American government has gone on record as opposing any group using U.S. territory for terroristic designs against other governments. It has refused, however, to be manipulated by the Philippine government into rounding up anti-Marcos supporters.

Numerous Filipino groups, most of them formed for non-political and frequently social reasons, have found that their annual elections of officers, their selection of programs and speakers, even their acts of charity have become a part of the struggle between pro and anti Marcos forces. In such struggles, the pro-Marcos elements hold most of the cards. They have access to publicity from the consulates. The New Society generously finances cultural troupes and government speakers, including the First Lady.[51] Even groups striving to maintain neutrality in the political struggle may reluctantly furnish forums for the regime because they need the money such entertainment and "name" officials will draw.

Conclusion

Characteristic of so many interactions between the Marcos regime and others, the chief beneficiaries of the policies pursued seem to be the tiny ruling elite with the costs diffused among the Filipino public. Certainly the Filipino American community does not benefit from the divisions, animosities, and manipulation that martial law has exacerbated. Any minority group suffers when its leadership must be diverted and divided by political policies in which they can be but pawns.

The United States does not benefit by the tug of war for the hearts, minds and pocketbooks of the American Filipino community. The

division in America represents a divided political constituency, but even more importantly mirrors the schisms within the Philippine society. As Vice-President Bush's effusive comments appeared to indicate at the June 30 "inauguration" of President Marcos, the U.S. wants desperately to maintain rapport with any de facto government in the Philippines for both political and military reasons. Yet, there is growing recognition among even conservative political scholars that there may be some long run unacceptable prices to pay for too ready an identification with the New Society.[52]

Finally, and most importantly, the means by which the New Society has sought to persuade the American Filipino community of its legitimacy and effectiveness are themselves the indicators of a flawed commitment to national development on the part of the ruling elite. Any government must make difficult decisions about trade-offs between economic and political objectives. The Marcos government has a reasonable and legitimate interest in securing the political goodwill of American Filipinos. What this paper has criticized is the President's frequent willingness to exchange personal popularity for hard economic consequences for the Philippine people.

Consider in summary, the underlying social reality of each of the President's policies directed at American Filipinos:

(1) an emphasis on infrastructure and administrative coordination for the subsidized recreation of vacationing foreigners, even as the Philippines' own citizens lack capital or loans with which to create productive jobs. This includes a willingness to divert scarce foreign exchange for the import of liquor and luxury foods for the tourism industry at a time when the average Filipino's caloric and especially

protein intake has declined. Whatever the economic rationale--which by the way, the tourism industry has not established by way of net receipts--the symbolic indifference to malnutrition and the hardships of Philippine life need to be recognized as inherent in the way tourism policy has been needlessly structured.

(2) a promotion of land and investment opportunities that gives foreigners who left that society financial advantages greater than those accorded the ones who remain--in urban housing, rural land, and in contracts for investment in the Philippines.

Though American Filipinos may individually benefit from these misplaced initiatives, it should be recognized that it is the regime, not the Philippine society that reaps the political or economic dividends. Moreover, in the government's attempt to influence American-Filipino activities in this country there are hidden costs in unity, cohesion, and political mobility and security.

Footnotes

[1]The Philippine News, April 1-7, 1981, p. 1

[2]Manila Journal, April 28-May 4, 1980.

[3]"The long unsightly queues of visa applicants in front of the American embassy may soon be a thing of the past. The Philippine government saying the long line presents a false picture of people on an exodus, has asked the American embassy to solve the problem...The long lines of visa applicants...start as early as 4 a.m. and yet...some 700 to 1000 people come to the embassy daily to undergo such an ordeal. The U.S. embassy...processes some 250 to 400 visa applications everyday." Manila Journal, July 28-August 3, 1980.

[4]See Linda Richter, "The Political Uses of Tourism: A Philippine Case Study," Journal of Developing Areas, 14 (January, 1980), 237-257; Richter, "Tourism By Decree," Southeast Asia Chronicle, 78, April, 1981; Richter, "Changing Priorities in Philippine Policy-Making: The Energy Crisis," a paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Meeting, March 12-15, 1981 in Toronto, Canada.

[5]For example, there have been instances where the Marcos government has sought to endow U.S. academic institutions. The Marcos 1.5 million dollar grant for a "chair" of East Asian and Pacific Studies announced November, 1977 at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy was cancelled after campus protests and the refusal of several Asian specialists to participate. The school still received $500,000. WE Forum, March 7-13, 1981.

[6]Manila Journal, March 3-9, 1980; The annual increase in tax returns filed from abroad has also been promoted by the government as an indicator of basic support for the New Society. Manila Journal, August 4-10, 1980.

[7]The dramatic range reflects different accounting procedures used within the government and their evaluation by different official spokesmen. For example, the Central Bank reported $359 million in remittances in 1979, but it relies on data from commercial banks which is often incomplete and neglects dollars sent through money orders to dependents or through other channels. In the same year Business Day reported over 1 billion dollars remitted, while the Minister of Labor, Jonathan de la Cruz anticipated 1980 would be the year when Filipino remittances topped one billion dollars. Alberto Pedrosa, chairman, Report of the United Filipino Association on Overseas Filipinos, (London: 1981), p. 7 and Appendix 3.

[8]Ibid, Appendix 3.

[9]Speech by Senator Benigno Aquino before the Association for Asian Studies, Toronto, March 13, 1981.

[10]Studies suggest Filipino immigrants as a whole are not politically active in conventional categories of voting, campaigning, or running for public office. See especially Benjamin Muego, "The Political Socialization of Filipino-Americans in Northwestern Ohio," a paper presented at the second International Philippine Studies Conference June 27-30, 1981, Honolulu, Hawaii.

[11]Manila Journal, May 12-18, 1980, p. 5.

[12]Manila Journal, April 21-27, 1980. In Hawaii alone Filipinos occupy key positions in state government. Two mayors, a state government director, a director in the city government of Honolulu, an associate justice of the State Supreme Court, a federal district judge, a county managing director, four deputy attorneys general, three county councilmen, and five representatives in the state legislature; Filipino Reporter, October 17-23, 1980; November 14-20, 1980. This issue includes 1980 election victories among Filipinos.

[13]Manila Journal, March 3-9, 1980.

[14]Linda Richter, Land Reform and Tourism Development: Policy-Making in Martial Law Philippines, (Schenkman, forthcoming).

[15]Filipino Reporter, March 13-19, 1981, p. 12.

[16]Eduardo Jarque, Los Angeles Office of the Tourism Representative, in a letter March 12, 1981.

[17]Interview with Vic Portugal, Department of Tourism, Research Statistics Division, June, 1977.

[18]Filipino Reporter, March 13-19, 1981, p. 12.

[19]Ibid., p. 2.

[20]The Philippine Times, May 26, 1980.

[21]Interview with Vic Portugal.

[22]Department of Tourism, Accomplishment Report 1976, pp. 42-43.

[23]Manila Journal, July 23-29, 1978.

[24]Though I first became aware of this selective treatment in 1977 when I briefly traveled with Canadian-based Filipino travel agents, the practice continues to this day. Bulletin Today, May 1, 1981 reports a week-long, Ambassador-escorted tour for 30 Filipino travel agents based in Hawaii. 19 of whom own or manage the biggest travel agencies in Hawaii.

[25]See Steve Psinakis, Two Terrorists Meet (San Francisco: Alchemy Press, 1981) for further background and details.

[26]The Philippine Times, July 15, 1980.

[27]Confidential interview with one of the convention's planners, June, 1977.

[28]Richter, "Political Uses of Tourism," p. 247.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Interview with Ramon Cabanero, Philippine Consulate, Honolulu, Hawaii, June 26, 1981.

[31]Manila Journal, February 4-10, 1980.
Manila Journal, March 3-9, 1980.

[32]Manila Journal, February 4-10, 1980; See also Manila Journal, August 4-10, 1980, p. 1. The First Lady met with 11 ambassadors and consul generals encouraging them to help Filipinos in America and Canada organize "for their own benefit."

[33]Manila Journal, April 28-May 4, 1980. There has been little operationalization of that commission thus far according to the assistant trade officer at the Philippine Consulate.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Asiaweek, April 17, 1981 pp. 22-23. Though there were forged ballots found in Zamboanga, and a majority of nay votes in Bicol, overall support for the plebiscite was eighty percent.

[36]Asiaweek, April 3, 1981, p. 13 had not found the measure unpopular or popular. Attention was focused on the other provisions recommended to the voters.

[37]Filipino Reporter, March 13-19, 1981.

[38]Teodoro Valencia, Philippine Daily Express (Manila), May 6, 1981.

[39]Gaudencia Tobias, "The Housing Imperative," Fookien Times Yearbook, 1980, (Manila: Fookien Times Yearbook Co.), pp. 232-237.

[40]Ibid., p. 237.

[41]WE Forum, March 21-27, 1981.

[42]Richter, Tourism By Decree.

[43]Richter, Land Reform and Tourism Development.

[44]Interviews at the Philippine Consulate in Hawaii, June 26, 1981.

[45]Kerkvliet, Ben, "Land Reform: Emancipation or Counter-Insurgency?" David Rosenberg, ed., Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 113-145.

[46]Reuben Canoy, The Counterfeit Revolution, (Manila: Philippine Editions Publishing, 1980), 206.

[47]The Philippine Times, July 15, 1980.

[48]Jack Anderson, The Washington Post, July 2, 1975. For much of the background of the incident see Steve Psinakis, Two Terrorists Meet, (San Francisco: Alchemy Books, 1981).

[49]The Philippine Times, July 15, 1980.

[50]Ibid.

[51]The Philippine Times, April 28, 1980.

[52]Richard Kessler, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies Testimony before Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, March 31, 1981. See also Carl Landé, "Philippine Prospects After Martial Law," Foreign Affairs, Summer, 1981.